

40-05-08.wpd --Blessed Are the Pure in Heart
appearance, purity, love, Holy Spirit
Matthew 5:8

God chooses to reveal Himself to those whose hearts reflect His.

INTRODUCTION:

--For modern times in this culture, one of the biggest understatements of Scripture is 1 Sam 16:7b, "...The LORD does not look at the things man looks at. Man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart." We live in a society that is extremely pre-occupied with the question, "*How do I look?*" What we need to be concerned about is "*How do I look to God?*" Jesus does not say, "*Happy are those who look attractive, for they will win friends and influence people.*" In the beatitude which is our text today, Mat 5:8, He says, "*Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.*" --God looks not at "the outward appearance" but "at the heart." WHY? To see if He is reflected there (after all, He made us in His image for that very purpose: to reflect Him!) But also, He wants to know how much of Himself He can reveal to us. **HOM.idea.**

I. What Makes Us So Focused on *Outward Appearance*?

- A. We are raised that way: "*Comb your hair... iron your clothes, shine your shoes! Don't wear that shirt: it has a stain on it.*" (But in Bible times, you dressed up on for *weddings* and wore sackcloth and ashes to *funerals*. For the first 300 years after Pentecost, no one dressed up to go to church.)
- B. Society keeps us focused on "*outward appearance*"
 1. **Fashion** is one of the biggest consumer-related industries in America. People wear clothing supposedly for comfort, but usually they buy new clothing for show.
 2. **Youthfulness and beauty** is also a big emphasis in this society.
 - a. *Why do women wear make-up?* Does it make them younger, more beautiful, or does it merely make them look that way?
 - b. *Why do some women wear girdles?* Does it keep them young and trim, or just looking that way? [Women once wore corsets that squeezed in their abdomens and pushed up their bosoms in order to draw *male* attention to the youthful *female* shape that they created. When they finally realized this unnatural pressure was literally killing them, they abandoned the corset, but kept its top portion, which became the *brasier* or

bra. Today, a recent research showed how the bra is also killing women by decreasing circulation to the breasts and trapping toxins which tend to cause breast cancer. Again, killing ourselves for looks!]

- c. **Body image** is another area where people join diet programs or buy exercise equipment that promise a body that *looks* perfect. (God built our bodies for exercise and for eating good food, but this focus on *outward looks* has led some to be mentally obsessed with losing weight to the point of *anorexia* (starving the body) or *bulimia* (self-induced vomiting) [5% of young women in the USA have one of these disorders.]

TRANS: I believe the words, "*Everybody's beautiful in their own way,*" but that doesn't sell in a society focused on "outward appearance." We need *a new value system*: God's! We need to focus on what God values. This beatitude says He's looking for hearts that are pure. **He wants to reveal Himself to those whose hearts reflect the purity in His own.**

II. How Do We Gain *Heart Purity*?

- A. This word "pure" has the meaning of "*being clean.*" (Although it's not in the Bible, the aphorism, "*Cleanliness is next to godliness,*" is true only in this sense of heart purity.)
- B. God the Holy Spirit is known as the *Heart Purifier*
 1. When Peter told the Jewish believers about the conversion of the Gentiles in Cornelius' household, he said in Acts 15:8-9, God, who knows the heart, showed that he accepted them by giving the Holy Spirit to them, just as he did to us. He made no distinction between us and them, for he **purified their hearts** by faith.
 2. When the Holy Spirit moves into a heart, He begins a *cleansing process* that starts on the day of conversion and continues throughout life.
 - a. What's motivated by love stays, but what's not motivated by love, He tries to remove. (It's a work of grace that takes our cooperation day by day, one heart-issue at a time...)
- C. Unfortunately, people like to have a *system*, a *list of rules* that define heart purity (this tendency has been in almost every Christian church or denominational movement down through history starting with the Judaizers in the early church down through the early history of my own denomination)
 1. Law-keeping often degenerates into the same old problem of

maintaining an *outward appearance* (not motivated by love).

2. Jesus showed how God "rule lists" also point to the heart and are rooted in the motivation of love-- Mat 22:37-40, Jesus replied: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments."

TRANS: *Heart-purity* is God imparting His love to the believer's heart through the Holy Spirit-- Rom 5:5, ...God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us. It's love from the Dove, but not the emotional, "lovey-dovey," infatuation that society calls "love." It's love that denies itself, takes up its Cross to serve both God and neighbor.

III. What Results From Heart-Purity? ("...they will see God")

A. Our eyes will be open to a fuller view of God in this life:

1. In nature-- God can be seen creation, but *heart purity* helps us treat all things in creation, including our bodies and those of others, with a reverence that sees the hand of the Creator behind everything-- Titus 1:15, To the pure, all things are pure, but to those who are corrupted and do not believe, nothing is pure. In fact, both their minds and consciences are corrupted. [The pornographic problem in society is directly related to an absence of heart purity. The unclean heart sees the human body as an avenue for fulfilling lust. God's love in our hearts helps us see and honor the human body as beautiful artwork from God's loving hand.]
2. In people-- People are created in the image of God. They may not reflect Him well, but in all their human faculties they still reflect the potential for eternal good that God created them for. (*Heart purity* should make us zealous to try our best to see them come to Christ, so that what we see of God's hand already in them will come to fullness through the Holy Spirit.)

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CONCLUSION:

--God chooses to reveal Himself to those whose hearts reflect His.

He is love. Let's be purely filled with love, and keep our eyes open.